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ABSTRACT

This booklet is one of a series of reports addressing the most critical issues confronting state boards of education throughout the United States. Each report attempts to present a concise, informative review and analysis of the best and most current information available on one of these critical topics. This booklet focuses on the role of state boards of education in political issues affecting education. Section 1 contains a brief overview and summary of the booklet; section 2 presents a review and analysis of the political role of state boards of education by Michael D. Usdan; section 3 presents a number of action alternatives recommended by the staff of the National Association of State Boards of Education; and section 4 contains footnotes and a brief annotated bibliography prepared by the author of section 2. (Author/JG)

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THE IMPERATIVE OF LEADERSHIP

Volume II, Number 2

A REPORT ON DEVELOPING CONSISTENT AND COOPERATIVE CONSTITUENCY LINKAGES

NASBE

EA 008 829

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PREFACE

This report on *Developing Consistent and Cooperative Constituency Linkages* is second in the continuing series of reports on timely issues of concern to State Boards of Education. Publication of these *Imperative of Leadership* issue packages is made available to all NASBE members with funds provided by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA, Public Law 89-10, Title V, Section 505), through the State of New York.

The report that follows is organized into four sections. Section I presents a condensed *Overview Summary*. Section II contains the research text on *Developing Consistent and Cooperative Constituency Linkages*, prepared by Dr. Michael D. Usdan, President, The Merrill-Palmer Institute, Detroit, Michigan. Section III, the *Action Alternatives*, contains recommendations developed by the NASBE staff. Section IV is an *Appendix*, consisting of Footnotes and an Annotated Bibliography.

NASBE wishes to express its appreciation to Dr. Usdan for his time and cooperation throughout the preparation of this report.

James M. Connor
NASBE President

August 1976
Denver, Colorado

SECTION I

Overview Summary

To sustain the integrity of the American educational system so that it is not overwhelmed by the interests—or disinterest—of various constituent groups, will require direction and leadership from a policy making body that is informed, articulate, responsible—and acquainted with the people in a state who make things happen. State Boards of Education, as decision making groups without vested interests beyond quality education for schoolage children, are uniquely situated to nourish a cohesive atmosphere among diverse educational interests.

The sometimes disparate goals of teachers' associations, school boards, parent-teacher associations (PTA's), students and others are competing for the educational policy maker's time and talents. Such pressures as desegregation efforts, teacher negotiations and politics, to name a few, demonstrate that we live in an increasingly complex society of which education can be viewed as only a part. Now, more than ever before, educational decision makers must combine their efforts with those representative of these other groups.

Since there appears to be a contemporary resurgence in the influence of state governments, it follows that this predominance will extend into educational affairs. Remember that the state government is legally responsible for education. Therefore, it is incumbent upon educational policy makers to familiarize themselves with the political process in general and with their state's particular political realities. They need to know which branches of state government are responsible for what; who among their state's lawmakers is interested in education; and who isn't and ought to be.

Get to know your state's governor and legislators. Let them know who you are and what you want. Let them be aware that you are aware—that you know there are social ills plaguing the nation that cost money to rectify. Don't harass and pester, but do be consistent, and persistent if you have to be. Know that a legislator has many constituents—and what you may want may be at odds with what some other group wants or demands, or with the legislator's imminent concerns.

Publicize your objectives, using mass media communication whenever appropriate. The effect of this will be to demonstrate your needs to your state's governor, legislators, education professionals and other decision makers; and it will show your constituents—students, parents, teachers, business leaders, and the citizenry at large—that you do work for them.

In today's world, where education, business, society and politics are so solidly intermingled, State Boards are in positions of leadership and also occupy a middle ground. From these positions, they can and should aid in establishing or identifying mutual concerns and interests. Not to disparage special interests, but to avoid allowing them to obscure those goals and desires that are common to us all should constitute a tenable focus for State Boards of Education.

SECTION II

Developing Consistent and Cooperative Constituency Linkages

By Michael D. Usdan, President
The Merrill-Palmer Institute
Detroit, Michigan

Education is becoming increasingly politicized and controversial at the state level. This trend will persist and intensify in the years ahead as issues such as finance, race and public employee negotiations draw State Board members into the mainstream of the body politic at the state level. Legislators and their staffs, members of the executive branch, and business, community and labor groups all have broadened the base of educational decision making dramatically in recent years.

Thus, State Board members must provide leadership in shaping more broadly based coalitions with constituencies that extend beyond professional education groups. The old professionally dominated coalitions are no longer viable. They have been fragmented by teacher militancy and other factors. The reality is that education now is an inextricable part of the "warp and woof" of general state politics.

Because of its profound economic implications and saliency as a public issue of first import, education can no longer be viewed as an isolated and insulated governmental function that somehow is mystically detached from the general political processes of state government. Thus, the need is for State Board members and others influential in the formulation of state policy to develop constituency linkages not only with education oriented lay and professional groups but also with all other major interest groups that attempt to determine public policy in major fiscal and program areas like education.

THE INCREASED INFLUENCE OF THE STATES

In recent years there has been a quiet but marked transformation of state government as a more influential participant in the federal system. Indeed, despite prevailing notions about the unresponsiveness and inadequacy of state government, there is compelling evidence that the states have been increasingly carrying more than their share of the burden of domestic governmental progress in recent decades.[1]

There are a number of plausible explanations for this renaissance of state government. The fiscal and programmatic limitations of most local governments have become all too apparent in a complex, technologically sophisticated post-industrial society in which change is the only constant. The issues are too com-

plicated and the consequent centralizing forces are simply too compelling for local government to adequately meet citizen needs in problem areas like transportation, pollution, education, welfare, and so forth that transcend limited geographical boundaries.

In the mid- and late-1960's, the federal government was viewed by many as the best hope for domestic progress and enlightenment. Numerous advocates of the Great Society ideology believed that only the federal government had the programmatic vision and expertise to redress societal inequities, and numerous Washington-based programs were generated in education and other major social policy fields.

Widespread disillusionment with massive federal programs, however, soon set in. Complaints mounted about the administrative difficulties inherent in centralized control of programs in a nation as diverse and variegated as the United States. The Republican victory in the 1968 presidential election and the cost of the war in Vietnam blunted the federal initiatives as influence, programs and resources began to flow back to the states through mechanisms like revenue sharing.

Education Is A Legal Responsibility

This shift back toward the states has persisted through the 1970's in both the Nixon and Ford Administrations. It has particular significance in the field of education, of course, which remains basically a legal responsibility of state government. As a result, the states at this time in history are in a pivotal position in regard to the formulation of educational policy. Thus, it is incumbent upon State Boards of Education to exercise more assertive leadership as state government becomes an even more vital linch-pin in the federal system. There are encouraging signs that the states have begun to assert that leadership in fields like educational finance,[2] planning, research and evaluation.

The leadership that has been forthcoming, however, usually has not been provided by State Boards of Education. Some argue that State Boards have remained relatively invisible, passive and uninfluential participants in the educational decision making process.[3] State Boards of Education, it is contended, can become more politically influential if they use their unique leverage at the political-educational interface more effectively. State Boards ought to assume a leadership role in the development of more diverse and broadly based coalitions of groups with common concerns for the formulation and enactment of enlightened state policy in areas like educational finance, planning and evaluation.

THE POLITICALIZATION OF EDUCATION

In recent years, education at the federal, state and local levels has been drawn inexorably into the mainstream of general politics. Complex issues such as race, finance, public employee negotiations, and intergovernmental and church-state relationships have all impinged profoundly upon the schools in unprecedented ways. Issues such as these can be treated meaningfully only in the broader context of general politics. The political volatility of the complex school busing issue is the most dramatic example of how education currently is inextricably interwoven into the broader social and political context of contemporary society.

The politicalization of education has been accelerated not only because of the saliency of issues like school busing and finance but also because schools are under closer public scrutiny. In other words, factors like the recent economic crisis, inflation, dissatisfaction with student performance and anti-teacher backlash have all broken down the once relatively marked isolation and insulation of education from general politics at all levels of government.

These developments already have precipitated profound changes in what was in most states a somewhat closed system of professionally dominated decision making on educational matters. The system already has been altered and opened up dramatically as legislators and governors and their staffs play an increasingly influential role in the formulation of state educational policy. The influence of teacher and administrator groups and their professional allies in state education agencies, while still substantial in most states, has unquestionably been diluted by the more active participation of the legislative and executive branches.

The old professionally dominated educational coalitions,[4] which were rather influential in a number of states, have been fragmented by the collective bargaining issue which has created so much divisiveness in the last fifteen years or so among teachers and their school boards and administrators.

These changes in the politics of education at the state level have caused a number of states to reassess the adequacy of their existing educational governance structures. New and interesting models of educational governance have been developed in states like Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, South Dakota and Virginia. In these states, for example, the controversial new position of secretary of education has been created. Appointed by the governor as members of the state cabinet, these secretaries of education are responsible for the coordination of all elements of the educational enterprise. Such a structure obviously directly integrates educational governance into the mainstream of general state politics. Advocates of this approach see education being strengthened by this "realistic" institutionalization of the link between politics and education while critics both lay and professional rail against the negative effects of closer linkages between the political and educational systems.[5]

COALITION POLITICS IN TRANSITION AT THE STATE LEVEL

Traditionally in many states, pro-school interest groups organized themselves into various types of coalitions to achieve their goals more effectively, and they frequently were influential in the political process in many states. Coalitions are common in the democratic process and educationally oriented organizations have coalesced for political action at the state level in much the same way as have interest groups representing manufacturers, veterans, labor and farmers.[6]

Historically, the membership core of organizations that constituted the state educational coalitions included the state teachers' association, the state school boards' association, various organizations representing school administrators, and the state Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). In some states the coalitions were small and tightly controlled by those groups that focused primarily on education like the teacher, PTA, school board and administrator groups. In other states, the coalitions were much more broadly based and included numerous lay organizations as well as the customarily predominantly education oriented groups. Although state education department officials were active and influential in many of the coalitions, State Board of Education members were notably uninvolved.

The relative political influence of the diverse educational coalitions is, of course, extremely difficult to assess objectively. A coalition can operate successfully only if it works compatibly within the larger political culture or environment of the state within which it is based. Different political styles are appropriate within different states.[7]

The basic strategy of any coalition is consent building among the constituent organizations. Conflict is minimized and every effort is made to avoid divisiveness as the strength of the coalition is predicated on its unity. Most educational coalitions have focused their activities on legislative programs, particularly on state aid and related fiscal matters. School aid has been the major

educational issue in most states as it affects virtually every district and taxpayer. If there is one issue on which almost every educator can agree, it is the need for additional revenue and consensus on this issue has been the major cohesive element in maintaining unity within the coalitions. Indeed, many coalitions which have been fearful of risking their unity on relatively unimportant or secondary issues have focused their attention almost exclusively on fiscal matters.

Educational coalitions generally have been dominated by organizations such as the teachers' and school boards' associations whose primary interest has been education. These associations, particularly the teachers' organizations, have had the mass memberships necessary to provide the political muscle, staff expertise, and, most important, the fiscal resources required to achieve coalition objectives. The teachers' groups, in particular, also have possessed the extensive grassroots base so essential to successful political activity.

Since the advent of teacher militancy in the 1960's, however, the traditional unity of the coalitions has been eroded. The customary strategy of consent building has been shattered by the conflict between more aggressive teachers' groups and their traditional allies such as organizations representing school boards, administrators and parents. The teacher militancy which has swept across the country in little more than a decade has profoundly influenced the structure and operations of the coalitions which for years had been so influential in the formulation of state educational policy.[8]

Many such coalitions thus have been fragmented and weakened greatly. The unity of the once rurally dominated educational coalitions has been eroded further in the last decade by legislative reapportionment which has compelled tactical shifts from a rural strategy to meeting the political needs and style of the suburban legislators who now control state capitols. The efforts of educators to maintain consensus have been further strained by political and judicial efforts to redress inequalities of educational opportunity, such as providing supplementary resources and programs for hard pressed city school districts and students who have particularly serious educational needs.

Thus, the pattern of educational decision making at the state level has been altered profoundly in recent years and traditional coalitions have been shattered beyond recognition in many states. In numerous capitols, the result has been to create a power vacuum which has already been filled in large measure by increasingly influential participants from the general political system such as governors, legislators and staffers from the executive and legislative branches of state government. What role, then can State Boards of Education, uninfluential traditionally in most capitols, play in this dramatically changed political situation?

THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AS A CATALYST

If education is to receive effective political support at the state level, a persuasive case can be made that revitalized lay leadership is essential. With the old coalitions riven asunder and with anti-professional sentiments common among political leaders and the general citizenry, lay leadership is essential. New political strategies must be mounted in state capitols to broaden and diversify the constituency base from which educational interests operate. There are few groups better positioned than State Boards of Education to coalesce a cross section of lay and professional organizations and interest groups to assert the cause of high quality public education.

State Boards can achieve this unique role as catalysts at the political-educational interface in state capitols, however, only if they become more knowledgeable of and involved in general state politics. State Board members, for example, must in many cases become more cognizant of factors such as the prevailing political culture in their state, the role of political parties, the degree of

inter-party competition that exists, the influence of the governor, and the technical capacity and professionalism of the legislature.

The role of the governor is of particular importance and State Boards must seek closer working relationships with the chief executive and his education advisors. Governors as chief executives have very significant constitutional and statutory power in most states in a number of major education decision making areas. They have important appointive powers and thus select key policy making and administrative personnel. In more than thirty states [Ed. 32 states], the governor appoints a majority of the State Board members. In five of these (Maine, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Virginia), the governor also appoints the chief state school officer. In addition, governors often are members, chairmen or *ex officio* participants on major policy making boards and committees. In Alabama, Florida, Montana and Tennessee for example, the governors serve as *ex officio* members of State Boards of Education.[9]

Governors wield political influence in a number of other ways that greatly influence educational policy making. As state expenditures have soared, chief executives are exercising stronger control over the budgetary process. In many states, executive budgets prevail and governors have the initiative in determining fiscal policy. They also frequently have great influence over legislatures as party leaders who also possess considerable leverage as a state's major patronage dispenser. The veto power is still another important source of gubernatorial influence.

The state legislature, of course, is a singularly important policy making agent in education. State Board members should be particularly aware of the role of the leadership and key committees in the legislative process. The influence of finance committees is of particular significance as they ultimately control not only state aid levels but also appropriations for the state education department or agency that administers State Board policies and programs. In many states the legislatures, like their counterpart the U.S. Congress, are beginning to build up staffs with greater financial expertise and in all likelihood will be exercising more fiscal influence *vis-a-vis* the executive branch, which until rather recently has dominated the budgetary process at both the federal and state levels.

There are a number of excellent recent illustrations of the executive and legislative branches of state government becoming more actively concerned with the shaping of educational policy. In New York, for example, even the prestigious State Board of Regents, the oldest State Board of Education in the nation, has been politicized to an unprecedented extent. The Regents has prided itself on its independence from the mainstream of state politics. This relative detachment of the Regents and the state education department from the legislative and executive branches, however, has ended. The Regents has been under attack because of alleged unresponsiveness to elected officials and the general public.[10] In 1974, the term of the Regents, who are appointed by the New York State Legislature, was shortened by legislative enactment from 15 to seven years in an effort to make the Regents more "accountable."[11]

In 1973, the then Governor Nelson Rockefeller proposed the creation of an Office of Education Performance Review so that the governor and the legislature could have more direct responsibility for deciding how the taxes they imposed were spent. This proposal, which was enacted in 1973 projected publicly the controversy that had festered for years between the elected political leadership in the state and the Regents and the New York Education Department. It appears that considerable numbers of elected officials have been alienated by the Regents. The Regents, which traditionally met with the governor only annually at a formal meeting and rarely as a group with legislators, was regarded by some critics as being too detached and remote from the political and fiscal realities confronting elected officials. Some elected officials were particularly alienated by the Regents' strong advocacy of busing for school desegregation. And, under

strong pressure from taxpayers in their districts at a time of fiscal crisis, legislators have been less than enchanted with the Regents' proposals for substantial increases in state aid.[12] Thus, continuing efforts have been made to curb the power of the Regents and the New York State Education Department. Indeed, in July, 1976, Governor Hugh Carey signed into law a bill that made the Commissioner of Education's rulings subject to court review; in New York State, the Commissioner has had unique quasi-judicial powers and his decisions heretofore have rarely been subject to court review.

Similar developments have occurred in many other states as education has become embroiled in the larger political issues of race, finance and public employee negotiations. Recent studies of successful school finance reform efforts indicate that leadership in this area has not been provided by traditional educational leadership groups like teacher associations and state education departments which usually have dominated the formulation of educational policy. New groups played the major roles in leading these successful school finance reform efforts.[13] The groups that provided the impetus for change were from outside existing educational structures and were external to the customary participants in the politics of education at the state level. This new leadership thrust was provided, for example, by governors (e.g., Minnesota), and legislators (e.g., Kansas). In many states reform efforts were facilitated by court decisions; newly constituted state citizen study committees (i.e., Maine); a national reform network supported by major universities and foundations; and civil rights lawyers and persons other than professional educators.

What, then, is an appropriate role for the State Board of Education in this new, more broadly based mode of educational politics at the state level? How can predominantly lay, part-time State Boards develop meaningful, consistent and cooperative constituency linkages at a time when factors like teacher militancy, the politicization of education, court orders and national influences have caused an erosion of lay influence?

The State Board As An Independent Agent

State Boards can benefit from the new visibility, responsiveness and influence of state governments which have strengthened their capacities significantly in recent years. Most state education agencies, for example, are now much more capable of exercising leadership in areas like research, planning and evaluation, although there is still considerable room for improvement in most capitols. While State Boards understandably must and should depend upon their chief state school officers and education departments for much advice and information, Board members must be viewed by politicians and the citizenry at large as independent agents free from professional domination and the vested interest perspectives and bureaucratic constraints which so frequently have thwarted educational improvement.[14]

An emerging role of State Boards should be to harmonize the political activities of diverse interest groups whenever possible around common goals. The State Board because of its legal responsibilities for educational policy making and lay composition in most cases is uniquely positioned to serve as a convenor and consensus building catalyst for those interested in quality public education. State Boards, located as they are at an interface between interest groups and the governance structure, should be more centrally engaged in the political process. State Boards should facilitate better communication among the very diverse constituencies which now are so concerned with education. Politically sophisticated State Boards could be the consensus generating key to creating powerful new educational coalitions at the state level; coalitions that not only are constituted by various external interest groups and units within the executive and legislative branches of state governments, but

also by traditional constituents such as teachers, PTA's, school boards and education administrators.

What, then, in more specific terms are some of the ways that State Boards can provide more effective leadership in the political arena? What techniques should State Board members utilize and what understandings of the political process should they possess in order to maximize their influence with the executive and legislative branches of government?

Grassroots Action

It is particularly important that State Board members recognize the crucial significance of political activities at the local or grassroots level. Grassroots support is of great importance to legislators and recommendations that genuinely emanate from constituents in the home district are of paramount interest to lawmakers. It follows that without strong local support for education, the various statewide educational leaders and officials lose much of their political currency. As effective as educational organizations may be, they are limited financially when compared to some of the lobbies that represent large commercial and business interests, and their membership is also small in relation to the total population of any given state. The effectiveness of statewide educational organizations is thus largely predicated on effective grassroots action at the local level.

Educational interests and support at the state and local levels are mobilized most effectively when there is unity on issues and close cooperation between lay and professional leaders. Articulate and knowledgeable lay leadership is of paramount importance as elected officials frequently are more receptive to the direct approaches and opinions of informed laymen who do not have the vested interests of professionals on educational matters. The most successful lobbying for education often projects laymen into the forefront while the professionals provide their expertise and guidance in more subtle and indirect ways.

Personal diplomacy is very helpful for success with legislators. It often takes many years to build up the rapport desired. State Board members can ask legislators for support but generally should not request definitive commitments, a proposition usually should not be put on an either/or basis to the legislator. The door should always be left open for future requests. Educational leaders must recognize that legislators have to consider many issues in addition to education.

Frequently, the more politically successful educational leaders see legislators at their home base whenever possible. In the state capitol, lawmakers are often more detached and formal. State Board members should become personally acquainted with lawmakers so that future communication will be more meaningful. Contact with the legislator must not be overdone, but infrequent communication should be avoided also. It is necessary to maintain continuous contact in order to establish the rapport necessary for the legislator to rely upon the educational leader's integrity and judgment. *Moderate but consistent contact is generally most desirable.* The legislator might be visited occasionally by the State Board member, if only to say hello, even if there are no professional matters to discuss or requests to make. This indicates that the educational leader is interested in the legislator as a person and is not just friendly at certain times to gain special favors.

Brevity is important and appreciated by legislators when proposals or ideas are presented. Legislators have little time for specifics and lengthy presentations of proposals. The best time to see a legislator appears to be at home, a month or so before a session starts. At this time the lawmakers are not deeply involved in legislative affairs and have more of an opportunity to consider carefully the ideas of constituents. This is late enough so that the lawmakers are not apt to forget meaningful recommendations. If legislators are contacted too far in

advance of the opening of a session, they are more likely to forget the proposals of constituents.

Communications with the legislators can be carried on through the mails, by personal visits and by telephone. Some State Board members could be more publicity conscious. They should avail themselves of radio, television and other media of mass communication. Newspapers should be contacted regularly and informed of what the schools are doing. An educationally-minded press is an important ingredient for effective communication with legislators.

State Board members should strive to gain more understanding of practical politics and public affairs. Legislators must weigh all sides of complex issues. To gain the confidence of legislators requires time, diplomacy *and facts*. An educational leader will be more effective in dealing with a legislator if he is aware of the lawmaker's situation and perspective. As a popularly elected official, the lawmaker desires and needs to be seen as much as possible by the voters. State Board members, for example, should invite legislators to educational functions whenever appropriate. The lawmakers greatly appreciate this consideration. By extending these invitations, contact with legislators can become a "two-way street" that is mutually profitable. Not only is the lawmaker doing favors for educational leaders but State Board members are reciprocating by inviting him to public functions.

Legislators are subjected to various approaches by educational interests. These contacts will range from an overly zealous teacher giving a youngster a letter to take home for his family to mail to the legislator, to mimeographed organizational literature. A large number of handwritten letters from constituents taking a position on a matter generally will give a legislator added reason to contemplate his position on an issue. Mimeographed organizational material often will not have this effect.

Reaching Your Legislator

There are three basic approaches to legislators that are commonly followed. One approach is that of a statewide organization on a matter of statewide import. This approach can often be effective, for it represents the collective opinion of the constituents of large organizations. Legislators cannot afford to ignore this approach; they will consider it seriously to determine if it truly reflects statewide rank-and-file sentiment. The second approach is the type of communication characterized by an organized effort to support legislation on a more localized issue. This type of communication commonly consists of standardized, mimeographed statements and is frequently of little significance. A few handwritten original letters are often more effective than hundreds of mimeographed and organizational forms of communication. The third approach is the group presentation or demonstration. This technique frequently annoys rather than persuades legislators. It is a proper exercise, however, of the rights of citizens to focus attention upon a particular problem. It is often not nearly as effective, however, as demonstration or march leaders believe.

Elected state officials have an enormous job to do for the welfare of millions of people. It is a serious and difficult task to undertake in a brief period of time. Many legislatures meet for only short periods of time, and for most of the session will convene for two or three days a week. This lack of time makes it virtually impossible for legislators to fully understand the complex issues that confront them. As a result, the lobbyists at state capitals have an important function to fulfill. The role of the lobbyist is falsely regarded by many people. Critics often contend that lobbyists are people who are only trying to gain undeserved rewards for special interest groups. Lobbyists, however, have the vital role of providing information for legislators who cannot possibly be familiar with all the ramifications of complex problems.

The success of educational interests at the state level increasingly will be dependent upon the quality of leadership provided by State Boards of Education. State Board members, by their responsible presentation of school needs, can be very helpful to legislators. These leaders uniquely can be trustworthy sources of information as well as persuaders.

Many of the more politically successful educational leaders place emphasis upon improving education generally. Undue emphasis on vested interest or "bread and butter" issues such as salaries and other teacher benefits gives the educational interests a public image of selfishness, and in reality often decreases the prospects for desired legislation. Politically sophisticated educational leaders believe that public opinion is more favorably aroused if the needs of youngsters and society as a whole are emphasized rather than teacher benefits; they realize that increased expenditures for any phase of the educational process will ultimately result in funds being released for "bread and butter" benefits. This de-emphasis of money matters is particularly important now when almost all public institutions are confronted with decremental budgets or the need to retrench substantially.

SECTION III

Action Alternatives

NASBE Staff Recommendations To State Boards

The process roles of convening constituency groups and harmonizing, synthesizing and translating their input into policy and legislative, budgetary and program thrusts are important and appropriate for the State Board. And they require people who are skilled in functioning as the facilitators and coordinators for these processes. Such roles also presume the gathering of accurate data that rather precisely chart the status of education against which constituent perceptions and inputs can be validated.

Often, the development of consistent and cooperative constituency linkages will depend upon the degree to which the State Board is perceived as both influential and effective. Thus, a State Board perceived as a do-nothing, politically weak entity, probably will have some difficulty in rapidly gaining anything other than polite and noncommittal responses from various constituency organizations. A State Board that sincerely desires to move into a major policy leadership role must do so *incrementally* and *systematically*.

To do that, it must *identify* the educational needs within the state, *translate* those into policy and legislative, budgetary and/or program thrusts; *build* constituency support; and *convince* the legislature and governor that action is needed. To that extent, nearly all of Dr. Usdan's suggestions are both specific and clear and can become a starting strategy for State Board action. Summarized, the following seem to be a logical sequence of steps for State Boards desiring to both incrementally and systematically build cooperative and consistent constituency linkages.

- **Establish the validity of the existing data base** regarding the status of education within your state. If data gaps exist, initiate steps to fill those gaps. If the data validity is questionable, initiate steps to gather accurate data.
- **Ask the chief to develop a plan and process** for convening constituency groups and for harmonizing and synthesizing constituency input.
- **Ask the chief to develop a mechanism for assessing the validity** of constituency identified needs with state education agency (SEA)-gathered and validated data.
- **Establish a mechanism for developing board priorities** and translating priorities into policy and legislative, budgetary and/or program thrusts.
- **Establish both rapport and mutual respect** with the legislature, individual legislators and the governor.
- **Establish a mechanism for mobilizing constituency and grassroots support** for your developed priorities.
- **Maintain a high degree of visibility** both by positive achievement on substantive issues and by a carefully designed public relations/media program.

SECTION IV

Appendix

Footnotes

[1]Daniel Elazar, "The New Federalism: Can the States Be Trusted?" *The Public Interest,* Number 35, Spring, 1974.

[2]Joel S. Berke, Michael Kirst and Michael D. Usdan, *The New State Politics of Education,* (Cambridge: Ballinger Press, 1976).

[3]Roald F. Campbell and Timothy L. Mazzoni, Jr., *State Policy Making for the Public Schools: A Comparative Analysis,* (Berkeley: McCutchan Publishing Corporation, 1976).

[4]Stephen K. Bailey, et. al., *Schoolmen and Politics* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1962).

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